

Emerging Myths and Realities in Teaching and Learning

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The new emerging myth in higher education is **Quality Assurance** QA, having brought about numerous accreditation agencies applying their own standards and procedures, ranging from institutional accreditation to programme accreditation. The latest trends are to streamline the various approaches into an international standard, e.g. ISO IEC 19796-1, comparable to ISO 9001:2008, for the Quality Management System QMS of a higher education provider.

Saavedra Hidalgo and Berchtold¹ report that in many areas of society - in industry, government and service sectors - we have witnessed in recent years an increasing interest and emphasis on quality; many efforts have been taken to establish systems and procedures for quality management and quality assurance in the education sector. The authors quote Wirth² who identified 34 quality assurance agencies in 23 countries. Increasing accreditation has been dramatic - while only six European countries had some form of accreditation in 1998, it grew within five years). According to Wirth more than 140 quality criteria are associated with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and most of these bodies take their own approaches.

Berchtold³ identified and compared various accreditation agencies engaged in supranational or international accreditation of providers and programmes of higher education and the manifold standards and procedures involved in order to serve as selection and decision making tool for universities and business schools. The question of accreditation and quality improvement is central to TNE. International accreditation is a valid option for a university, as well as quality auditing and certification.⁴

CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes 60 institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations.⁵ The Recognized Accrediting Organizations (as of May 2011) chart lists regional, national faith-related, national career-related and programmatic accreditors that are or have been recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) or both.⁶ This list contains 56 US Accreditation Agencies recognised by CHEA, and 58 Accreditation Agencies recognised by USDE, out of a total number of 87 listed US Accreditation Agencies.

The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) was established in 1991 with only 8 members. Today the total membership exceeds 200 members. Higher education has dramatically changed over the last two decades. Distance education as well as vocational education have become increasingly more important as is the need for recognition of prior learning. Higher education has become more global than ever before. Professional accreditation has become more important as more higher education institutions, delivering programmes in different modes, enter the market. All these have thrust the quality assurance agencies into ever expanding roles.⁷ The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is a world-wide association of some 200 organisations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education. The great majority of its members are quality assurance agencies that operate in many different ways, although the Network also welcomes (as associate or institution members) other organisations that have an interest in QA in HE.

¹ Saavedra Hidalgo, R.R., Berchtold G. (2011) *México y la Unión Europea una nueva interacción educativa: Criterios europeos para Evaluar la Calidad en E-learning y la transferencia de créditos ECTS. Área temática: Iniciativas multilaterales y gubernamentales para la innovación en educación y formación.* Universidad Azteca.

² Wirth, M. A. (2005): *Quality Management in E-Learning: Different Paths, Similar Pursuits.* Paper to the 2nd International SCIL Congress. <http://www.scil.ch/congress-2005/programme-10-11/docs/workshop-1-wirth-text.pdf> (Retrieved 21.2.2005)

³ Berchtold, G.. (2007) *Synopsis of standards and procedures of recognised accreditation agencies awarding international accreditation to universities and business schools.* Universidad Azteca

⁴ Berchtold, G., (2008) *Transnational Higher Education. Development and Management.* Universidad Azteca.

⁵ CHEA Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2011) *2010-2011 Directory of CHEA-Recognized Organizations* http://www.chea.org/pdf/2010_2011_Directory_of_CHEA_Recognized_Organizations.pdf

⁶ CHEA (2011a) http://www.chea.org/pdf/CHEA_USDE_AllAccred.pdf

⁷ INQAAHE (2011) <http://www.inqaah.org/main/about-inqaah>

The core statement of a research project of the European Quality Observatory postulates: Quality is considered highly relevant but rarely implemented in reality.⁸ Jan Pawlowski⁹ investigates "quality development in professional and continuous education – reference models and the integration of working and learning", with the primary focus on quality development for education providers. Another focus is quality development by integration of work-, learning- and knowledge-processes as well as the design of integrated inter-operative systems based on standards of learning-technology. The research design is practice-related, based on results of multi-year research findings, namely in four application-related projects (virtual education and training, European Quality Observatory, TRIANGLE, and Quality Initiative e-learning in Germany). Despite several research papers address knowledge management and e-learning, publications about the application of quality-management and quality-assurance are rare. While improvement of quality is mainly an implicit objective, the Pawlowski research addresses for the first time central issues and methods of Business-IT for application and implementation of explicit conceptions and methods of quality management. According to Bittner¹⁰ QA Quality Assurance for international competitiveness puts emphasis on the development of a comprehensive concept of developing and ensuring quality in the education system, considering the relationship between autonomy and evaluation.

Two driving forces, technology and globalisation, have changed the environment for universities worldwide. Technology means information technology development, the internet, e-learning, virtual classrooms, altogether new challenges for traditional classroom-based higher education settings. In principle, open and distance higher education in virtual classrooms can serve an unlimited number of students. The question of accreditation and quality improvement is central to transnational higher education TNHE. International accreditation is a valid option for a university, as well as quality auditing and certification.¹¹

Higher education has given ample proof of its viability over the centuries and of its ability to change and to induce change and progress in society. Owing to the scope and pace of change, society has become increasingly knowledge-based so that higher learning and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations. Higher education itself is confronted therefore with formidable challenges and must proceed to the most radical change and renewal it has ever been required to undertake, so that our society, which is currently undergoing a profound crisis of values, can transcend mere economic considerations and incorporate deeper dimensions of morality and spirituality. It is with the aim of providing solutions to these challenges and of setting in motion a process of in-depth reform in higher education worldwide that UNESCO has convened a World Conference on Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action.¹²

As announced during the ministerial meeting in Prague, the conference to focus on the internationalisation of quality assurance as part of the Bologna process was organised in Amsterdam, March 2002. The aim of the conference was to present various developments in quality assurance of higher education and its internationalisation in Europe, also in perspective of developments beyond the European higher education area. At the conference various actors gave an overview of a variety of activities at various levels.¹³

According to Jung¹⁴ quality culture can be defined as an institutional culture that promotes the introduction of an internal QA system, values the capacity building for implementing QA arrangements, stresses the link between the internal QA system and accountability to the public at the national and international levels, and focuses on learning rather than teaching. The survey results show that a quality culture has been emerging, if not fully integrated, in the mega universities investigated. All the mega universities have developed and implemented QA standards

⁸ Cedefop Panorama series; 110. 2005. Qualität im E-Learning. Nutzung und Verbreitung von Qualitätsansätzen im europäischen E-Learning. Eine Studie des European Quality Observatory. Ulf-Daniel Ehlers, Lutz Goertz, Barbara Hildebrandt, Jan M. Pawlowski, Luxemburg: Amt für amtliche Veröffentlichungen der Europäischen Gemeinschaften, ISBN 92-896-0409-3. ISSN 1562-6180.

⁹ Pawlowski Jan M. (2007) Zusammenfassung der kumulativen Habilitation im Fach „Wirtschaftsinformatik“ Qualitätsentwicklung in der Aus- und Weiterbildung – Referenzmodelle und die Integration von Arbeiten und Lernen. Universität Duisburg-Essen

¹⁰ UNESCO 2001: Creative and Inclusive Strategies for Lifelong Learning: Lifelong learning: implementing a generally accepted principle. Elisabeth Bittner, p. 11ff

¹¹ Berchtold (2008) Transnational Higher Education. Development and Management. Universidad Azteca.

¹² World Conference on Higher Education Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action. 9 October 1998: World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action

¹³ (Westerheijden and Leegwater, 2003, 11)

¹⁴ UNESCO/COL 2005: QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEY OF MEGA UNIVERSITIES. Insung Jung, p. 91f

and procedures in key areas of distance education activities and at least four mega universities surveyed have institutionalised a central QA unit and thus sought the development of a more systematic and coherent quality culture. Another indicator for the emergence of a quality culture is capacity building efforts made by the institutions. At least half of the mega universities have provided continuous staff development opportunities to their academic and administrative staff in pursuit of quality improvement. It is found that international organisations such as UNESCO, COL, OECD and World Bank have provided useful QA guidelines and resources for distance educators. Moreover, most of the institutions have shown an aspiration of obtaining national recognition as a high quality DE provider. Some have gone beyond national level accreditation and recognition and pursued international recognition such as ISO certification for their services.

The survey also shows that there exists a variety of QA systems of distance education even though the globalisation and competitiveness of higher education and the development of technology have brought distance teaching universities closer together in terms of developing a common quality culture. The level of QA policy integration in an overall university policy framework varies across the mega universities. Some mega universities apply a set of standards and criteria that are predetermined by the institution or by the national quality assurance agency to evaluate and monitor key areas of distance education, whereas other institutions provide only general guidelines for QA and leave room for the internal and external review teams or individual units to make QA judgments. Some mechanisms for assuring quality of distance education adopt rigorous internal QA measures, whereas in systems where the accountability concern does not dominate, the QA system is less centralised and the primary objective is self-improvement of institutions. Even though core areas – such as course and programme development and delivery – for QA are similar in most mega universities, some QA areas draw more attention than others. In some institutions, assessment of staff performance and tutoring services is emphasised, whereas in other institutions, learner assessment or monitoring of e-learning courses gets more attention.

The World Declaration on Higher Education ¹⁵ suggests moving from vision to action through qualitative evaluation: Quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions, and activities: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment. Internal self-evaluation and external review, conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise, are vital for enhancing quality. Independent national bodies should be established and comparative standards of quality, recognized at international level, should be defined. Due attention should be paid to specific institutional, national and regional contexts in order to take into account diversity and to avoid uniformity. Stakeholders should be an integral part of the institutional evaluation process. Quality also requires that higher education should be characterized by its international dimension: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers and students, and international research projects, while taking into account the national cultural values and circumstances. To attain and sustain national, regional or international quality, certain components are particularly relevant, notably careful selection of staff and continuous staff development, in particular through the promotion of appropriate programmes for academic staff development, including teaching/learning methodology and mobility between countries, between higher education institutions, and between higher education institutions and the world of work, as well as student mobility within and between countries. The new information technologies are an important tool in this process, owing to their impact on the acquisition of knowledge and know-how.

The Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education ¹⁶ aim to support and encourage international cooperation and enhance the understanding of the importance of quality provision in cross-border higher education. The purposes of the Guidelines are to protect students and other stakeholders from low-quality provision and disreputable providers as well as to encourage the development of quality cross-border higher education that meets human, social, economic and cultural needs. The quality of a country's higher education sector and its assessment and monitoring is not only key to its social and economic well-being, it is also a determining factor affecting the status of that higher education system at the international level. The Guidelines aim to provide an international framework for quality provision in cross-border higher education that responds to the challenges. The Guidelines are based on the principle of mutual trust and respect among countries and on the recognition of the importance of international collaboration in higher education. Cross-border higher education encompasses a wide range of modalities from face-to-face (taking various forms such as students travelling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning (using a range of technologies and including e-learning). In implementing the Guidelines,

¹⁵ World Conference on Higher Education Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action. 9 October 1998: World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action, Article 11

¹⁶ UNESCO 2005a: Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education. p. 4

consideration should be given to the variety of provision and its different demands for quality assurance.¹⁷

The UNESCO Guidelines for Higher Education Stakeholders¹⁸ in particular for higher education institutions/ providers require that commitment to quality by all higher education institutions/providers is essential. To this end, the active and constructive contributions of academic staff are indispensable. Higher education institutions are responsible for the quality as well as the social, cultural and linguistic relevance of education and the standards of qualifications provided in their name, no matter where or how it is delivered. In this context, it is recommended that higher education institutions/providers delivering cross-border higher education: (a) Ensure that the programmes they deliver across borders and in their home country are of comparable quality (...); (b) Recognize that quality teaching and research is made possible by the quality of faculty and the quality of their working conditions that foster independent and critical enquiry. (...) (c) Develop, maintain or review current internal quality management systems so that they make full use of. (...) (d) Consult competent quality assurance and accreditation bodies and respect the quality assurance and accreditation systems of the receiving country when delivering higher education across borders, including distance education; (e) Share good practices by participating in sector organizations and inter-institutional networks at national and international levels; (f) Develop and maintain networks and partnerships to facilitate the process of recognition by acknowledging each other's qualifications as equivalent or comparable; (g) Where relevant, use codes of good practice (...) (h) Provide accurate, reliable and easily accessible information on the criteria and procedures of external and Guidelines for Higher Education Stakeholders. (...) (i) Ensure the transparency of the financial status of the institution and/or educational programme offered.

In establishing priorities in their programmes and structures, higher education institutions should: (a) take into account the need to abide by the rules of ethics and scientific and intellectual rigour, and the multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach; (b) be primarily concerned to establish systems of access for the benefit of all persons who have the necessary abilities and motivations; (c) use their autonomy and high academic standards to contribute to the sustainable development of society and to the resolution of the issues facing the society of the future. They should develop their capacity to give forewarning through the analysis of emerging social, cultural, economic and political trends, approached in a multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary manner, giving particular attention to: - high quality, a clear sense of the social pertinence of studies and their anticipatory function, based on scientific grounds; - knowledge of fundamental social questions, in particular related to the elimination of poverty, to sustainable development, to intercultural dialogue and to the shaping of a culture of peace; - the need for close connection with effective research organizations or institutions that perform well in the sphere of research; - the development of the whole education system in the perspective of the recommendations and the new goals for education as set out in the 1996 report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century; - fundamentals of human ethics, applied to each profession and to all areas of human endeavour; (d) ensure, especially in universities and as far as possible, that faculty members participate in teaching, research, tutoring students and steering institutional affairs; (e) take all necessary measures to reinforce their service to the community, especially their activities aimed at eliminating poverty, intolerance, violence, illiteracy, hunger and disease, through an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach in the analysis of challenges, problems and different subjects; (f) set their relations with the world of work on a new basis involving effective partnerships with all social actors concerned, starting from a reciprocal harmonization of action and the search for solutions to pressing problems of humanity, all this within a framework of responsible autonomy and academic freedoms; (g) ensure high quality of international standing, consider accountability and both internal and external evaluation, with due respect for autonomy and academic freedom, as being normal and inherent in their functioning, and institutionalize transparent systems, structures or mechanisms specific thereto; (h) as lifelong education requires academic staff to update and improve their teaching skills and learning methods, even more than in the present systems mainly based on short periods of higher teaching, establish appropriate academic staff development structures and/or mechanisms and programmes; (i) promote and develop research, which is a necessary feature of all higher education systems, in all disciplines, including the human and social sciences and arts, given their relevance for development. Also, research on higher education itself should be strengthened through mechanisms such as the UNESCO/UNU Forum on Higher Education and the UNESCO Chairs in Higher Education. Objective, timely studies are needed to ensure continued progress towards such key national objectives as access, equity, quality, relevance and diversification; (j) remove gender inequalities and biases in

¹⁷ UNESCO 2005a: Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education. p. 7-11

¹⁸ UNESCO 2005a: Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education. p. 15-17

curricula and research, and take all appropriate measures to ensure balanced representation of both men and women among students and teachers, at all levels of management; (k) provide, where appropriate, guidance and counselling, remedial courses, training in how to study and other forms of student support, including measures to improve student living conditions.

While the need for closer links between higher education and the world of work is important worldwide, it is particularly vital for the developing countries and especially the least developed countries, given their low level of economic development. The use of new technologies should be generalized to the greatest extent possible to help higher education institutions, to reinforce academic development, to widen access, to attain universal scope and to extend knowledge, as well as to facilitate education throughout life. Governments, educational institutions and the private sector should ensure that informatics and communication network infrastructures, computer facilities and human resources training are adequately provided.

Institutions of higher education should be open to adult learners: (a) by developing coherent mechanisms to recognize the outcomes of learning undertaken in different contexts, and to ensure that credit is transferable within and between institutions, sectors and states; (b) by establishing joint higher education/community research and training partnerships, and by bringing the services of higher education institutions to outside groups; (c) by carrying out interdisciplinary research in all aspects of adult education and learning with the participation of adult learners themselves; (d) by creating opportunities for adult learning in flexible, open and creative ways.¹⁹

Development and Management of Open and Distance TNE

Human action is one of the agencies bringing about change. It is an element of cosmic activity and becoming. Therefore it is a legitimate object of scientific investigation. As—at least under present conditions—it cannot be traced back to its causes, it must be considered as an ultimate given and must be studied as such.²⁰ “Choosing determines all human decisions. In making his choice man chooses not only between various material things and services. All human values are offered for option. The modern theory of value widens the scientific horizon and enlarges the field of economic studies.”²¹ There is also a convincing argument for systems thinking and systemic management approaches: “the notion of emergence in strategy finds increasing support in chaos theory, the new science of complex adaptive systems. There is no need for leaders, order emerges naturally from myriads of small adaptive adjustments.”²² In this sense a firm's resources include tacit skills, patterns of co-operation, and intangible assets that take time and learning to evolve. These resources cannot be traded, changed or imitated with ease. The origin of a firm's competitive advantage, therefore, lies in what is unique and embedded in its resources – these constitute its core, distinctive competences.²³

According to Kotler²⁴ today's economic landscape is shaped by the two powerful forces of technology and globalisation. The globalisation and e-learning trends challenge the existing quality assurance (QA) frameworks of distance education DE, which have focused more on widening access than on assuring quality, and often do not address for-profit and cross-border education. Especially in the context of growing globalisation in distance education, there has been an urgent need for international initiatives to review quality assurance mechanisms of DE for higher education at the national and institutional level, discuss new challenges of a changing DE environment, and build a capacity for QA to enhance the quality provision in a globalised higher education market.²⁵

Hiam and Schewe²⁶ suggest organising for New-Product Development:

- Generating ideas
- Screening ideas
- Developing and testing the concept
- Business Analysis
- Product Development
- Test Marketing
- Commercialization

¹⁹ World Conference on Higher Education Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action. 9 October 1998: World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action

²⁰ Ludwig von Mises, Human Action, p. 18

²¹ Mises, 1949, 1996, p. 3

²² Mazzucato 2002, p.44

²³ Mazzucato 2002, p.45 (Grant 1998)

²⁴ Kotler Philip, 1999, p. 3

²⁵ UNESCO/COL 2005: QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEY OF MEGA UNIVERSITIES. Insung Jung, p. 80f

²⁶ Hiam and Schewe (1992) The Portable MBA in Marketing, p. 244ff

Strategy is about organizational change. An action is strategic, when it allows a firm to become better than its competitors, and when the competitive advantage can be sustained. Strategy is about both: choosing new games to play and playing existing games better. Some strategy researchers describe strategy as a rational and deliberate process (the Design school), while others describe it as an evolutionary process which emerges from experimentation and trial and error (the Evolutionary and Processual schools); others describe a dynamic picture of competition, where firms not only are influenced by the environment, but also actively seek to change it (e.g. the Schumpeterian approach).²⁷ The point is that human interaction and how it takes place is central to knowledge creation and transfer. It is also formative in shaping organisational routines within which useful knowledge can be exploited as an organisational rather than an individual resource.²⁸ The category *means and ends* presupposes the category *cause and effect*. In a world without causality and regularity of phenomena there would be no field for human reasoning and human action.²⁹ Human action is necessarily always rational.³⁰ When applied to the means chosen for the attainment of ends, the terms rational and irrational imply a judgment about the expediency and adequacy of the procedure employed. The critic approves or disapproves of the method from the point of view of whether or not it is best suited to attain the end in question.³¹ The only standard which praxeology applies is whether or not the means chosen are fit for the attainment of the ends aimed at. If Eudaemonism says happiness, if Utilitarianism and economics say utility, we must interpret these terms in a subjectivistic way as that which acting man aims at because it is desirable in his eyes.³² According to Mazzucato³³ the logic of managerial capitalism with the business enterprise (and its management) as the central actor: since business enterprises play the leading role in industrial development, industrial firms accordingly need to be in a process of constant organizational renewal. While new technologies provided opportunities, it was the business enterprises and their managers that determined whether those opportunities would be converted into sustainable advantages. It was the development of effective professional management and organizational systems to support the development of vertically integrated business enterprises.

The Plan-Do-Check-Act Management cycle requires the careful utilisation of resources. Strategic management is the vision of the future state of the enterprise. In terms of higher education the products are the educational programmes offered, the degrees awarded, the academic, technical and administrative support for students. Products are mainly services and hence the hybrid phenomenon of "service-goods"³⁴ applies. There are two basic approaches for finding new business opportunities available to production-capacity-focused businesses. The direct approach is by entering new markets; the indirect approach involves making improvements in process technologies that will lower prices, increase quality, or decrease time-to-market, thereby enabling businesses to enter new market segments. In addition to finding opportunities, businesses can use their imagination to create opportunities that align to their present capabilities. Businesses with focused strategies are a step ahead of their competitors.³⁵ As with all service provisions the client is the recipient of the quality delivered. The approach is, therefore, client-centric, that is student-centric. There are several approaches to designing in prevention of downstreaming problems through improvements. The first is to maintain a system and process view of the work.³⁶

Courses entail both, own course-books and materials, and third party content, such as Open-Course-Ware, standard coursebooks, literature on the internet, or courses purchased from third party education providers, including transfer-credits. The front-store of the university is the website, the student entry point is the platform of the university. The platform offers Moodle-standard opportunities to login, enrol into courses, download instructions and course-materials, communicate with others and the tutor(s), pass online examinations. In order to operate a course with examination, it is required to upload a coursebook for self study (or require the student to acquire it), assignments for correspondence with tutor (optional), and one or more multiple choice tests to be taken online on the platform. Such provision is standard of most universities / or ODL and online-programmes. It enables a high degree of standardisation and automation of services rendered and maintains a high level of e-learning quality.³⁷ The output of global R&D should be

²⁷ Mazzucato 2002, p.1

²⁸ Mazzucato 2002, p.309

²⁹ Ludwig von Mises, Human Action, p. 22

³⁰ Ludwig von Mises, Human Action, p. 19

³¹ Ludwig von Mises, Human Action, p. 20

³² Ludwig von Mises, Human Action, p. 21

³³ Mazzucato 2002, p.275

³⁴ Berchtold, 2006

³⁵ Perry et.al. p. 131f

³⁶ Eric Verzuh (ed.) The Portable MBA in Project Management, p. 236

³⁷ Berchtold, 2006

global products and services, global marketing and selling strive for the appropriate balance of global uniformity and local adaptation in all elements of the marketing mix, but with a probable bias in favour of uniformity, unless a good case can be made for local exceptions.³⁸

The transboundary aspects of TNHE require multilingual and multicultural approaches to international management³⁹. One way to achieve this outcome is the international format of standard programmes, e.g. in Environmental Studies, Business Administration, Coaching, to name but a few, delivered in English, German and/or in Spanish. Kotler⁴⁰ draws a distinction between customized marketing and mass customized marketing. Customized marketing takes place when the seller prepares a new product from scratch for the buyer. Mass customization takes place when the company has established basic modules that can be combined in different ways for each customer. Another applied approach is collaboration with local, regional, or national providers in certain countries, with the focus on validation of programmes and award of degrees. Validation partnerships increase the outreach and the language capacities for the given university.

Mazzucato⁴¹ explores the implication of recent changes (information technology revolution; globalisation – global nature of competition) in the world economy for strategic behaviour; emphasizing how information technology has increased the role of positive feedback as well as how the rise of information technology has increased the importance of inter-firm networks in allowing firms to generate new knowledge and process information.

Partnership and alliances⁴²: Partnership and alliances amongst stakeholders - national and institutional policy-makers, teaching and related staff, researchers and students, and administrative and technical personnel in institutions of higher education, the world of work, community groups - is a powerful force in managing change. Also, non-governmental organizations are key actors in this process. Henceforth, partnership, based on common interest, mutual respect and credibility, should be a prime matrix for renewal in higher education.

A very simple definition of quality is "a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability, at low cost and suited to the needs of the market."⁴³ Quality of design focuses on determining the quality characteristics of products that are suited to the needs of a market, at a given cost; that is, quality of design develops products from a customer orientation.⁴⁴ In order to increase the standing and reputation of programmes the institution may pursue an additional accreditation provided by an international accreditation agency recognised in the USA or in the EU, or it may pursue a branch campus with accreditation by the host-country. For auto-evaluation, the an institution may apply the ODLQC Open & Distance Learning Quality Council standards, an accreditation recognised e.g. by DETC as quality assurance system.

Strengthening higher education management and financing⁴⁵: The management and financing of higher education require the development of appropriate planning and policy-analysis capacities and strategies, institutions should adopt forwardlooking management practices that respond to the needs of their environments. The ultimate goal of management should be to enhance the institutional mission by ensuring high-quality teaching, training and research, and services to the community. This objective requires governance that combines social vision, including understanding of global issues, with efficient managerial skills. Leadership in higher education is thus a major social responsibility and can be significantly strengthened through dialogue with all stakeholders, especially teachers and students, in higher education. Financing of higher education as a public service: The funding of higher education requires both public and private resources. The role of the state remains essential in this regard.

The cost structures in open and distance learning are quite different from cost structures in conventional types of education. Capital investments usually substitute for high recurrent costs, making economies of scale a decisive factor. Large distance learning programmes may produce graduates at considerably lower costs than conventional institutions. This depends, however, also on a number of other factors. The costs of open and distance learning vary a great deal according

³⁸ Mazzucato 2002, p. 364f

³⁹ Berchtold, 2008

⁴⁰ Kotler Philip, 1999, p. 29f

⁴¹ Mazzucato 2002, p.321

⁴² World Conference on Higher Education Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action. 9 October 1998: World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action, Article 17

⁴³ Gitlow, Oppenheim & Oppenheim, p. 3

⁴⁴ Gitlow, Oppenheim & Oppenheim, p. 5

⁴⁵ World Conference on Higher Education Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action. 9 October 1998: World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action, Article 13

to the use of learning materials, media and technologies, and types and organization of student support services. In order to evaluate costs it is also necessary to consider the rate of completion of studies.⁴⁶ Simple cost efficiency studies do not take into account broader qualitative and social aspects. Funding of open and distance learning institutions is often different from that of conventional institutions. Open and distance learning should be taken to remedy any unjustified economic discrimination between students in open and distance learning and other students.⁴⁷

With regard to strategic thinking and knowledge management, Mazzucato⁴⁸ postulates that knowledge is central to wealth creation and organised competitive performance. Knowledge Management requires the pursuit of different types of objectives and the development of different types of resource strengths, process capabilities and organisational structures. The development of organisational advantages requires a focus upon internal organisational dynamics. Firms exist to facilitate the acquisition, creation, exploitation and transfer of useful knowledge. The acquisition of new knowledge is an essential ingredient in the success of strategies; knowledge is a critical resource, organisations require practical know-how in a wide range of areas and an ability to exploit these disparate contributions effectively.⁴⁹

Kotler⁵⁰ suggests the following winning marketing practices:

- Win through higher quality
- Win through better service
- Win through lower prices
- Win through higher market share
- Win through adaption and customization
- Win through continuous product improvement
- Win through product innovation
- Win through entering high-growth markets
- Win through exceeding customer expectations

One of the core messages of Kotler⁵¹ is using marketing to understand, create, communicate, and deliver value. Kotler⁵² suggests adapting to the new age of electronic marketing, requiring from marketers to rethink fundamentally the processes by which they identify, communicate, and deliver customer value. The concept of unit of competitive advantage (UCA) helps to explain why some organizations either emphasize the wrong capabilities or deemphasize the right capabilities. The UCA includes the critical processes that create distinctiveness within an established strategic direction.⁵³ A common challenge associated with strategic improvising is the development of world-class core capabilities. Core capabilities are of primary importance because they provide the most leverage to strategic thrusts.⁵⁴ The program management organization infrastructure is the glue that holds the practice and discipline of project management together in organizations.⁵⁵ Regarding the integration of information support with business needs, Piasecki et.al⁵⁶ postulate, because solutions integrate business processes with technology support, additional education contributes to a better understanding of relevant issues and applicable options. Work teams grow more empowered as they increase ownership of their processes.⁵⁷ The real meaning of leading with vision is transforming all the various images, hopes, fears, expectations, and desires to contribute toward a way of talking about the organization and its affairs that the majority can commit to.⁵⁸ Despite its mystical aura, vision is a critical aspect of leadership, and it very much reflects the new world of competition. By its nature, vision implies looking ahead and often with a paradoxical twist – seeing with a degree of clarity what may not be apparent to others.⁵⁹

⁴⁶ UNESCO 1997. OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING. Executive Summary, Chapter XIX, p. 4

⁴⁷ UNESCO 1997. OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING. Executive Summary, Chapters XX, XXI, p. 4f

⁴⁸ Mazzucato 2002, p.303f

⁴⁹ Mazzucato 2002, p. 305ff

⁵⁰ Kotler Philip, 1999, p. 5ff

⁵¹ Kotler Philip, 1999, p. 17

⁵² Kotler Philip, 1999, p. 205ff

⁵³ Perry et.al. p. 75

⁵⁴ Perry et.al. p. 88f

⁵⁵ Eric Verzuh (ed.) The Portable MBA in Project Management, p. 371

⁵⁶ Piasecki et.al. (1999), p. 189

⁵⁷ Wellins et.al. (1991): Empowered Teams, p. 28

⁵⁸ Cohen (1993) The Portable MBA in Management, p. 30

⁵⁹ Collins et.al. (1994) The New Portable MBA, p. 397

Accreditation

Accreditation gives international credibility to programmes and an overview of the position against international standards.⁶⁰ Accreditation⁶¹ focuses on the quality of education. Standards set demanding but realistic thresholds, challenge educators to pursue continuous improvement, and guide improvement in educational programs. It is important to note that accreditation does not create quality learning experiences. Academic quality is created by the educational standards implemented by individual faculty members in interactions with students. A high quality degree program is created when students interact with a cadre of faculty in a systematic program supported by an institution. Accreditation observes, recognizes, and sometimes motivates educational quality created within the institution. Accreditation: The process of external quality review used in higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities, and higher education programs for quality assurance and quality improvement. Success results in an accredited institution and/or program. In some countries, it conveys institutional authority to offer specific programs. 62

The work of CHEA 63 is designed to strengthen communication across national boundaries through demonstrating similarities and differences in key quality assurance and accreditation terminology used in different parts of the world. Acknowledging that this language involves considerable ambiguity of meaning, CHEA, working with international colleagues, seeks to enhance our shared understanding of terms regularly employed in quality review. Accreditation in the United States is a collegial process of self-study and external peer review for quality assurance, accountability, and quality improvement of an academic institution or program designed to determine whether or not it has met or exceeded the published standards of its accrediting association and is achieving its mission and stated purpose; whereas in Western Europe it is perceived as an evaluation and assessment of an institution or its programs in relation to its aims and objectives, its recognized standards, and its own goals. The assessors are looking primarily at the success of the institution in achieving its goals. Also refers to formal government authorization given to institutions to grant degrees. In Germany, normally refers to evaluation and assessment of the accreditation agencies that accredit only those programs leading to a B.A. or M.A. In the United Kingdom the QAA Code of Practice on collaborative provision—a process by which an institution without its own degree-awarding powers is given wide authority by a university or other awarding institution to exercise powers and responsibility for academic provision. The awarding institution is ultimately responsible for the quality and standard of the award (qualification). 64

CHEA 65 provides the following definitions related to accreditation and quality of higher education provision:

Assessment: A diagnostic form of quality review and evaluation of teaching, learning, and programs based on a detailed examination of curricula, structure, and effectiveness of the institution, its internal review, and quality control mechanisms.

Audit: A process of review of an institution or program to determine if its curriculum, staff, and infrastructure meet its stated aims and objectives. An audit focuses on accountability of institutions and programs. (In the U.K., an audit is an institutional process. The term "audit" is scheduled to be replaced in 2002 by "institutional review" as part of a new academic review process.)

Audit Report: (U.K.) The document prepared following a quality assessment peer review team site visit. The report generally focuses on institutional quality, academic standards, learning infrastructure, and staffing. In Europe, the document is more likely to be called an "evaluation report" or "assessment report."

Criteria: Standards for accreditation or certification of an institution or program. These involve expectations about quality, effectiveness, financial viability, compliance with national (U.S.: state and federal) rules and regulations, outcomes, and sustainability. In the U.K., "criteria" refers to standards for degree-awarding powers and the title "university."

Quality: Refers to "fitness for purpose"—meeting or conforming to generally accepted standards as defined by an accrediting or quality assurance body.

Quality Assessment: A diagnostic review and evaluation of teaching, learning, and outcomes based on a detailed examination of curricula, structure, and effectiveness of the institution or program. Designed to determine if the institution or program meets generally accepted standards of excellence.

⁶⁰ <http://www.mbaworld.com/page/about/index.html>

⁶¹ <http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/> Eligibility Procedures and Accreditation Standards for Business Accreditation

⁶² CHEA (2006) – International Quality Review: Glossary of Key Terms in Quality Assurance and Accreditation

⁶³ CHEA (2006) – International Quality Review: Glossary of Key Terms in Quality Assurance and Accreditation

⁶⁴ CHEA (2006) – International Quality Review: Glossary of Key Terms in Quality Assurance and Accreditation

⁶⁵ CHEA (2006) – International Quality Review: Glossary of Key Terms in Quality Assurance and Accreditation

Quality Assurance: Planned and systematic review process of an institution or program to determine that acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are being maintained and enhanced. Usually includes expectations that mechanisms of quality control are in place and effective. Also (U.K.), the means through which an institution confirms that the conditions are in place for students to achieve the standards set by the institution or other awarding body.

Quality Audit: A test of an institution's quality assurance and control system through a self-evaluation and external review of its programs, staff, and infrastructure. Designed to provide an assessment of an institution's system of accountability, internal review mechanisms, and effectiveness with an external body confirming that the institution's quality assurance process complies with accepted standards.

Quality Improvement: The expectation that an institution will have in place a plan to monitor and improve the quality of its programs. In most cases, quality assurance and accrediting agencies require that established procedures ensure that this is an ongoing process.

Self-study: The review and evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of an institution's own academic programs, staffing, and structure, based on standards set by an outside quality assurance body, carried out by the institution itself. Self-studies usually are undertaken in preparation for a quality assurance site visit by an outside team of specialists. Results in a self-study report.

Subject Benchmark: (U.K.) Provides a reference point against which outcomes can be measured. Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programs in a specific subject. They also represent general expectations about the standards for the award of qualifications at a given level and articulate the attributes and capabilities that those possessing such qualifications should be able to demonstrate.

In 2004, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), the American Council on Education (ACE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and the International Association of Universities (IAU) issued a statement, *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide*, outlining a set of principles that should guide the provision of cross-border education. 66

Principles for Cross-Border Higher Education

Cross-border higher education should strive to contribute to the broader economic, social, and cultural well-being of communities. While cross-border education can flow in many different directions in a variety of contexts, it should strengthen developing countries' higher education capacity in order to promote global equity. In addition to providing disciplinary and professional expertise, crossborder higher education should strive to instill in learners the critical thinking that underpins responsible citizenship at the local, national, and global levels. Cross-border higher education should be accessible not only to students who can afford to pay, but also to qualified students with financial need. Cross-border higher education should meet the same high standards of academic and organizational quality no matter where it is delivered. Cross-border higher education should be accountable to the public, students, and governments. Cross-border higher education should expand the opportunities for international mobility of faculty, researchers, and students. Higher education institutions and other providers of cross-border education should provide clear and full information to students and external stakeholders about the education they provide.

Quality⁶⁷

Does the institution have in place a process of ongoing quality review, feedback, and improvement that relies on faculty expertise and incorporates the views of students? Has the institution taken steps to promote the application of this process to its educational initiatives abroad? Does the institution apply the same quality assurance principles, policies, and practices—and standards of academic and organizational quality—no matter where its programs are delivered? Does the institution employ the same standards and procedures in appointing and evaluating faculty members, wherever the instruction is offered? When instruction is provided primarily or entirely over the internet or by other electronic means to students in the host country, does the institution also provide appropriate technical support for students and faculty, access to library resources, advising, and other student services? Does the institution provide advising and orientation support for students, wherever they are enrolled? Does the institution provide adequate administrative support for its programs and activities, wherever they are offered?

⁶⁶ ACE et.al. www.unesco.org/iau/p_statements/index.html *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide*.

⁶⁷ ACE et.al. *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide*.

Institutions are urged to consider in the self-assessment process what evidence they can identify to substantiate their answers with regard to the following aspects: 68 Contribution to Broader Public Good; Capacity Building; Relevance; Accessibility; Quality; Accountability; Transparency; Commitment to High-Quality Higher Education Across Borders.

CHEA has passed principles 69 for US Accreditors working internationally for the accreditation of non-US Institutions working globally in order to advise Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) accrediting organizations and to provide a framework for U.S. accreditors undertaking reviews of non-United States (U.S.) institutions and programs operating in countries outside the U.S. They are intended to strengthen the working relationship among U.S. accreditors and international quality assurance agencies and encourage and enhance ongoing cooperation and communication:

Principle 1. Considerations and Actions for U.S. Accreditors When Determining to Undertake Accreditation of Non-U.S. Institutions and Programs in Another Country

Principle 2. Expectations for Conduct of U.S. Accreditation Reviews of Non-U.S. Institutions and Programs in Another Country

Principle 3. Accreditor Expectations of Providers of U.S. Online and Web-based Instruction and Programs Exporting to Another Country

Principle 4. Responsibilities of U.S. Accreditors Working with Non-U.S. Institutions and Programs to Students and Colleagues in Another Country

Hayward 70 provides a survey of Multi-lateral Agreements That Address International Quality Assurance:

Bologna Agreement

Declaration of 19 June 1999 by European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna. Agreed to construct a "European Higher Education Area" based on fundamental principles of university independence and autonomy to ensure that higher education and research in Europe adapt to the changing needs of society and advances in scientific knowledge. Work to increase international competitiveness of European system of higher education. Agree to work together to adopt a system of comparable degrees to promote European citizens and adopt a system of two main cycles—undergraduate and graduate with the second leading to the masters or doctorate. Also agreed to establish a system of academic credits (such as the European Credit Transfer System) that would be easily transferable to promote widespread student mobility, improve access for students and training opportunities, recognize staff work in Europe, promote European cooperation in quality assurance working toward compatibility, and promote European dimensions of higher education. This is an agreement moving Europe toward comparable degrees and cooperation in quality assurance.

Lisbon Convention

An agreement about recognition of qualifications (degrees and diplomas) for higher education in Europe adopted in Lisbon in April 1997. Supersedes the former strict logic of "equivalence" of diplomas and degrees with the concept of recognition. The convention assumes trust between participating countries about the effectiveness of quality assurance and accreditation in each country. Includes a "diploma supplement" issued to students obtaining a degree. Developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES, it describes the type, level, context and the status of diplomas or degrees in a standardized way. It is an information tool to enhance portability and transparency of European diplomas and degrees. The Convention is designed as de facto recognition of degrees in Europe by the other signatories.

MERCOSUR

Created by the Treaty of Asuncion signed by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay on March 26, 1991. Chile joined in 1996 as an associate member as did Bolivia in 1997. Focused on free transit of goods and service between member states, elimination of customs rights and nontariff restrictions, fixing a common external tariff, and educational integration. Agreements are being established over the whole education sector. To date, agreements have been made about mutual recognition of primary and junior high degrees (other than technical studies), with accreditation given to all such nontechnical courses in another member state. To work out accreditation in other areas in member states, a Regional Technical Commission will be created. It will also serve as a

⁶⁸ ACE et.al. www.unesco.org/iau/p_statements/index.html *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide.*

⁶⁹ CHEA (2001) CHEA Principles (*Approved by CHEA Board of Directors September 25, 2001*)

⁷⁰ Hayward – CHEA: Multi-lateral Agreements That Address International Quality Assurance

forum to resolve differences between member states about these issues and establish equivalencies of degrees and certificates between educational systems. The Commission will be made up of officials from respective Ministries of Education.

Sorbonne Declaration

Declaration of 25 May 1998 stressing universities central role in developing European culture. Adopted by United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy. It urged the creation of the European area of higher education as key to citizen mobility and employability as well as the continent's development. Other European countries were invited to join in this effort. It set the stage for broad participation and consultation that was to result in the Bologna Declaration in June 1999. While not directly focused on quality assurance, it paved the way for the Bologna agreement and European cooperation in higher education generally.

Washington Accord

Agreement set out on 28 October 1997 and consented to by engineering accrediting organization from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, South Africa, and Hong Kong. Sets criteria, policies and procedures for accrediting engineering academic programs. Agreed that the signators accept accreditation decisions by each other and will publish statements to that effect. Recognizes the "substantial equivalence" of each other's programs in satisfying the academic requirements for the practice of engineering. Will carry out information exchange and mutual monitoring, observe each other's accreditation visits, and work to encourage best practices. Provides for admission of new members and a biennial general meeting.

The European Dimension – Recognition and Accreditation in Europe

Recognition in Europe could serve students from the countries participating in the Bologna-Process to gain professional or academic recognition of their previous studies. Professional recognition of academic degrees and professional titles earned abroad the Bologna-area is mostly subject to professional associations, commercial authorities and in particular to individual employers. Academic recognition, on the other hand, relates to equivalence of academic degrees with a degree awarded in a particular country and its comparability with the national higher education system and degrees awarded in that accepting country. Academic recognition is mostly applied in order to continue studies at universities or research-institutions, at graduate or postgraduate level. Academic recognition, however, is sometimes required for so-called regulated professions, like lawyers, medical doctors, engineers, and alike.

Conscious of the fact that education is a human right, and that higher education, which is instrumental in the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, constitutes an exceptionally rich cultural and scientific asset, considering that knowledge is universal, being part of the common heritage of humankind and that means of making knowledge and learning more accessible to each individual must be sought, aware that the great diversity of the cultures and higher education systems existing in the world constitutes an exceptional resource that must be preserved, promoted and fostered, considering that higher education increasingly has an international dimension, owing to the rapid expansion and internationalization of knowledge and to the links and solidarity established within the scientific and university community, and that wider access to educational resources worldwide through greater mobility for students, researchers, teachers and specialists is essential to this international dimension, UNESCO Member States adopted the Recommendation regarding Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education. According to the Recommendation 'recognition' of a foreign qualification in higher education means its acceptance by the competent authorities of the State concerned (whether they be governmental or non-governmental) as entitling its holder to be considered under the same conditions as those holding a comparable qualification awarded in that State and deemed comparable, for the purposes of access to or further pursuit of higher education studies, participation in research, the practice of a profession if this does not require the passing of examinations or further special preparation, or all the foregoing, according to the scope of the recognition. Member States should take all feasible steps within the framework of their national systems and in conformity with their constitutional, legal and regulatory provisions to encourage the competent authorities concerned to give recognition to certificates of secondary education and other diplomas necessary for access to higher education, and to give recognition to qualifications in higher education that are awarded in the other Member States, with a view to enabling their holders to pursue further studies, training or research in their institutions of higher education, subject to all academic admission requirements obtaining for nationals of that State; including recognition of partial studies carried out in higher education institutions as well as to facilitate recognition of preparation at the higher education level for the practice of a profession in order to favour optimum use of human resources

available and the full integration into society of all of its members . The competent authorities and institutions concerned should take into account the wide diversity of institutions, types of study, programme content and teaching methods, including distance teaching and other non- traditional forms of higher education. In evaluating the comparability of a foreign qualification, authorities should also take into account the rights that would have been enjoyed by its holder in the country in which it was obtained. ⁷¹

The Lisbon Convention ⁷² considering that the great diversity of education systems in the European region reflects its cultural, social, political, philosophical, religious and economic diversity, an exceptional asset which should be fully respected; desiring to enable all people of the region to benefit fully from this rich asset of diversity by facilitating access by the inhabitants of each State and by the students of each Party's educational institutions to the educational resources of the other Parties, more specifically by facilitating their efforts to continue their education or to complete a period of studies in higher education institutions in those other Parties; considering that the recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees obtained in another country of the European region represents an important measure for promoting academic mobility between the Parties; attaching great importance to the principle of institutional autonomy, and conscious of the need to uphold and protect this principle; convinced that a fair recognition of qualifications is a key element of the right to education and a responsibility of society; conscious of the wide ranging changes in higher education in the European region since previous Conventions were adopted, resulting in considerably increased diversification within and between national higher education systems, and of the need to adapt the legal instruments and practice to reflect these developments; conscious of the need to find common solutions to practical recognition problems in the European region; conscious of the need to improve current recognition practice and to make it more transparent and better adapted to the current situation of higher education in the European region; the signatories have agreed on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region providing a framework for the further development of recognition practices in the European region.

Nothing in the Lisbon Convention shall be deemed to derogate from any more favourable provisions concerning the recognition of qualifications issued in one of the Parties contained in or stemming from an existing or a future treaty to which a Party to this Convention may be or may become a party. ⁷³ Basic principles related to the assessment of qualifications ⁷⁴ are that holders of qualifications issued in one of the Parties shall have adequate access, upon request to the appropriate body, to an assessment of these qualifications; no discrimination shall be made in this respect on any ground; and each Party shall ensure that the procedures and criteria used in the assessment and recognition of qualifications are transparent, coherent and reliable. Decisions on recognition shall be made on the basis of appropriate information on the qualifications for which recognition is sought. Each Party shall ensure, in order to facilitate the recognition of qualifications, that adequate and clear information on its education system is provided. Decisions on recognition shall be made within a reasonable time limit specified beforehand by the competent recognition authority and calculated from the time all necessary information in the case has been provided. If recognition is withheld, the reasons for the refusal to grant recognition shall be stated, and information shall be given concerning possible measures the applicant may take in order to obtain recognition at a later stage. If recognition is withheld, or if no decision is taken, the applicant shall be able to make an appeal within a reasonable time limit. Regarding the recognition of qualifications giving access to higher education ⁷⁵ according to the Lisbon Convention each Party shall recognize the qualifications issued by other Parties meeting the general requirements for access to higher education in those Parties for the purpose of access to programmes belonging to its higher education system, unless a substantial difference can be shown between the general requirements for access in the Party in which the qualification was obtained and in the Party in which recognition of the qualification is sought. In the Parties in which access to higher education may be obtained on the basis of non-traditional qualifications, similar qualifications obtained in

⁷¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopted by the General Conference at its twenty-seventh session in Paris, 13 November 1993 the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education

⁷² Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region (The European Treaty Series, n°165, Council of Europe - UNESCO joint Convention) Lisbon, 11 April 1997 http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Lisbon_convention.pdf

⁷³ Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region (The European Treaty Series, n°165, Council of Europe - UNESCO joint Convention) Lisbon, 11 April 1997, Art II.3

⁷⁴ Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region (The European Treaty Series, n°165, Council of Europe - UNESCO joint Convention) Lisbon, 11 April 1997, Article III

⁷⁵ Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region (The European Treaty Series, n°165, Council of Europe - UNESCO joint Convention) Lisbon, 11 April 1997, Section IV

other Parties shall be assessed in a similar manner as non-traditional qualifications earned in the Party in which recognition is sought. For the purpose of admission to programmes of higher education, each Party may make the recognition of qualifications issued by foreign educational institutions operating in its territory contingent upon specific requirements of national legislation or specific agreements concluded with the Party of origin of such institutions. Regarding the recognition of periods of study⁷⁶ each Party shall recognize periods of study completed within the framework of a higher education programme in another Party. This recognition shall comprise such periods of study towards the completion of a higher education programme in the Party in which recognition is sought, unless substantial differences can be shown between the periods of study completed in another Party and the part of the higher education programme which they would replace in the Party in which recognition is sought. With regard to the recognition of higher education qualifications⁷⁷ a recognition decision is based on the knowledge and skills certified by the higher education qualification, each Party shall recognize the higher education qualifications conferred in another Party, unless a substantial difference can be shown between the qualification for which recognition is sought and the corresponding qualification in the Party in which recognition is sought. In order to facilitate the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education, the Parties undertake to establish transparent systems for the complete description of the qualifications obtained.⁷⁸

The European Dimension of International Accreditation

EADL European Association for Distance Learning sets Minimum Standards or Quality for EADL Members⁷⁹:

Pre-enrolment practices: At all times information given to potential students, either written or orally, shall be truthful and accurate. It must be clearly stated if face-to face teaching (when it takes place) is an integral part of the correspondence course, or additional to it. The minimum content of the prospectus must provide:

- the course name
- the course content (syllabus)
- the course level
- the length of the course
- the course objectives
- the studyload required by the student- i.e. the study time (e.g. hours or weeks)
- qualifications (if any) that can be obtained
- internal and external examinations (if any) prepared for
- the number of examinations or assignments in the course
- the target group the course is aimed at
- the starting level required (i.e. what, if any previous qualifications are needed)
- a clear explanation of any special conditions pertinent to the institute or the country it operates in concerning the course, or the contract
- information as to whether the course material supplied is all-inclusive or if additional materials have to be purchased

The contract with the student must state in writing:

- the course name and the name of the institution
- the fees for the course
- the tuition and services included in the fee
- the terms of payment
- how payment is to be made
- the duration of the contract
- the conditions (if any) for cancelling the course
- terms and conditions for any refund of fees
- details of any guarantees
- a cooling-off period of at least 7 days
- who owns the copyright
- who owns the course material (the student or the institute)

Language used in the contract shall be clear and unambiguous.

⁷⁶ Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the european region (The European Treaty Series, n°165, Council of Europe - UNESCO joint Convention) Lisbon, 11 April 1997, Section V

⁷⁷ Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the european region (The European Treaty Series, n°165, Council of Europe - UNESCO joint Convention) Lisbon, 11 April 1997, Section VI

⁷⁸ Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the european region (The European Treaty Series, n°165, Council of Europe - UNESCO joint Convention) Lisbon, 11 April 1997, Section IX

⁷⁹ MINIMUM STANDARDS OF QUALITY FOR EADL MEMBERS

The EADL Code of Conduct ⁸⁰ postulates that it is essential for the success of EADL that the way members conduct business should stand up to the test of public criticism. In this context, the EADL Code of Conduct can be regarded as a means of introducing EADL to the public as an association of quality providers. It can help EADL members to gain a competitive advantage over non-members. But this will work only if members make a real commitment to meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct and display towards their students the attitude expressed by its rules. Mere technical compliance is not enough. The aim is to provide the kind of quality service students have a right to expect from EADL members. To help its members derive the full benefit from the quality of the service they offer, EADL gives students a guarantee that they will receive from members the kind of quality service that the rules of this Code of Conduct define. To be able to give that guarantee, EADL needs an honest commitment from all its members to comply with the rules and regulations of the Code, and will set up a procedure to deal with any complaints that may be received from students. Applicants for membership will be asked to confirm compliance with the Code by signing it. Existing members will also be asked to sign the Code, or to give an indication as to the period of time they need to implement the Code. They will be given a maximum of two one-year periods for full implementation. Members will be asked to renew their commitment every three years.

The Code is based on five principles:

- the principle of proper care
- the principle of legal security
- the principle of reasonableness
- the principle of reliability
- the principle of due publicity

EQUAL

EQUAL ⁸¹ comprises seven national and three regional associations in Europe, representing over 750 business schools which in turn provide business and management education to over 1 million students. All members of EQUAL are fully committed to the continuous improvement of the quality of this provision and this is achieved in a variety of ways including the development of national quality standards, quality audits and for example EQUIS, the international accreditation scheme. The European Quality Link (EQUAL) ⁸² is the international association of quality assessment and accreditation agencies in the field of European management education. It has as its main objective the continued improvement of quality in business schools. As part of this activity, EQUAL aims to agree common standards for programmes, where appropriate, and to establish benchmarks. Master degrees exist in many European countries but there are currently variable interpretations of their nature. This position paper is intended to encourage business schools to consider a common approach, and to inform participants and employers as the "Bologna" process and the creation of the European Higher Education Space evolve. The main aim is to provide clear information to the international market regarding the nature of the programmes on offer. To the extent that in each national system there is an attempt to communicate internationally in English, there is a need to have some minimum consensus on the use of the different labels. As an international association representing the management education profession in Europe, EQUAL is seeking to make a positive contribution to the establishment of a European market in higher education.

Definition of the Master's level in Europe: A level achieved after 4 or 5 years of higher education. It is usually preceded by a first university qualification, which can be considered a Bachelor's level, although sometimes this level is only marked by an intermediate stage in a long 5-year continuous programme, sometimes after 2 years, more often after 3 years. Segmentation of Master's degrees in Europe by programme type: The segmentation does not imply that these types are sequential. There is no hierarchy, no assumption that a student must graduate from one level before entering another higher level.

According to the paper "European Quality Link (EQUAL)" the European Quality Link (EQUAL) ⁸³ has as its main objective the continued improvement of quality in business schools. As part of this activity, EQUAL aims to agree common standards for programmes, where appropriate, and to establish benchmarks. The Master of Business Administration (MBA) is the first widely accepted international degree, but there are variable interpretations of the nature of this degree. (...) It should be stressed that these are merely guidelines and have no formal basis in law. However, the supporting national associations' aim is that they become widely used across Europe over time as a minimum standard. It is anticipated that schools and countries, which do not yet meet these

⁸⁰ EADL Code of Conduct for Members.

⁸¹ EQUAL: A responsible Approach to league tables

⁸² Equal Position Paper on the Designation of Master's Degree Titles in Management Education in Europe

⁸³ EQUAL: European Quality Link (EQUAL)

guidelines, will evolve towards them, or superior, thus resulting in a common European understanding of the MBA.

EFMD European Foundation for Management Development. EFMD is an international not-for-profit association in Brussels - **EQUIS**

The key constituents in the EQUIS process are as follows⁸⁴: The EFMD Board; The EQUIS Team at EFMD; The EQUIS Committee; The EQUIS Awarding Body; THE EFMD BOARD. The EFMD Board establishes by formal vote EQUIS policy, standards and procedures based on the proposals submitted by the EQUIS Committee. It appoints the members of the Awarding Body and the Committee. The EQUIS Committee, composed of academic and corporate representatives, defines and monitors the EQUIS process from the eligibility of candidate schools to the proposal submitted to the Awarding Body. Its members support and advise the EQUIS director in the execution of his mandate. All major decisions concerning policy, standards and procedures are submitted to the EFMD Board for approval. Its roles and responsibilities include:

- Definition and review of the accreditation criteria
- Definition and review of eligibility criteria
- Definition and review of accreditation procedures
- Decisions on the eligibility of institutions
- Recommendations on the pricing structure for EQUIS
- Development of a business and marketing plan

The EQUIS Committee meets at least four times a year at the request of the EQUIS director, who chairs the meetings. The EQUIS Awarding Body is composed of representatives of high profile organisations that are stakeholders in the quality improvement of management. It evaluates the reviewers' reports on institutions that are applying for EQUIS accreditation and, based on their recommendations, makes the final decision to confer a European Quality Label upon those management institutions that have demonstrated excellence at an international level. Its roles and responsibilities include:

- The evaluation of the peer review reports on the candidate institutions
- The final decision on accreditation

The Awarding Body meets at least three times a year at the request of the EQUIS director.

EQUIS⁸⁵ is the leading international system of Quality Assessment, Quality Improvement and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in management and business administration. The EQUIS Scheme has been designed with special focus on all the activities of business schools that aim to meet international standards of quality. The fundamental objective of EQUIS is to raise the quality of management education worldwide. EQUIS is European in its inspiration and global in its scope. Its approach to the assessment of quality is rooted in respect for the diversity of institutional and cultural contexts. EQUIS promotes no "one best model" for a business school and it does not look for standardisation of degree programmes, course content or delivery modes. EQUIS facilitates standard setting, benchmarking, mutual learning and the dissemination of good practice across borders. The principle of continuous improvement is at least as important as the high level of quality. EQUIS evaluates whole institutions such as business schools and university faculties of business and management. It assesses not just degree programmes but all the activities and sub-units of the institution, including research, e-learning units, executive education provision and community outreach. EQUIS looks for a balance between high academic quality and the professional relevance provided by close interaction with the corporate world. A strong interface with the world of business is, therefore, as much a requirement as a strong research potential. Institutions must demonstrate not only high general quality in all dimensions of their activities, but also a high degree of internationalisation. As an international accrediting body, EQUIS seeks to identify institutions that are distinguished by an added international dimension. With companies recruiting worldwide, with students choosing to get their education outside their home countries, and with schools building alliances across borders and continents, it is important to be able to identify those institutions in other countries that deliver high quality education in international management.

Description of the EQUIS scheme⁸⁶: EQUIS is an international system of strategic audit and accreditation designed by Europeans for the assessment of institutions in widely different national contexts. Although it is inspired by the special needs imposed by extreme cultural diversity in Europe, the EQUIS standards are those of effective education for international management and apply to schools in any cultural environment in any region. (...) The EQUAL dynamic model that lies

⁸⁴ EQUIS Peer Review Guide, page 11

⁸⁵ The EFMD accreditation for international business schools

⁸⁶ Source: EQUIS Peer Review Guide

at the heart of the EQUIS scheme was specially designed to provide a framework for handling this diversity. A truly international accreditation or quality assessment scheme has to combine the need for commonly agreed high standards with the need to respect the diversity of national systems. It has to consider the educational and cultural environment in which the institution operates and relate it to the wider European and international context. This effectively rules out classical, single-context compliance schemes and necessitates a concerted and more flexible approach involving all the principal actors in management development in Europe. Most important, there is no emphasis placed on a particular model for business schools. (...) EQUIS is, however, much more than an accreditation scheme. It was conceived, as its name indicates, as a quality improvement system, providing an unusual combination of accreditation as a recognition of high international quality and a full strategic audit as a guide to an institution's future progress. The scheme is designed to approach quality as an ongoing process in which schools benchmark each other's performance and open their doors to evaluation by peers and customers.

According to the EQUIS Peer Review Guide ⁸⁷ the EQUAL Quality Model used in the EQUIS framework lies at the heart of EQUIS processes and consists of eleven chapters setting out the criteria or standards for key domains of quality. The principal features of the EQUIS process and standards can be summarised as follows:

- EQUIS offers an international and intercultural approach to quality assessment.
 - EQUIS places a great emphasis on corporate concerns, both in the standards themselves and in the assessment processes.
 - EQUIS looks at the performance of the institution taken as a whole, including all of its programmes and not just the MBA programme, and uses outcome-based perspectives and criteria.
 - Special attention is paid to executive education with a separate chapter devoted to this area.
 - EQUIS stresses the personal development of managers and support of their entrepreneurial and managerial skills.
 - EQUIS is conceived as a learning process involving an international forum for defining the relevant quality criteria. EQUIS is dynamic and forward looking with a concern for new trends.
- Full details of the EQUIS criteria are contained in the document 'Guidance Notes on the EQUIS Quality Criteria' EQUIS Peer Review Guide

EQUIS applies the following quality and accreditation standards, which are summarised⁸⁸: Context, Governance and Strategy. Programmes. Students. Faculty. Research and Development. Executive Education. Contribution to the Community. Resources and Administration. Internationalisation. Corporate Connections.

Applicants may use the EQUIS Standards & Criteria ⁸⁹ for preparation of an application. This document sets out the full range of the EQUIS quality standards and the criteria against which achievement of these standards will be measured. The standards and the associated criteria are grouped into ten chapters covering the different areas that will be reviewed. The purpose of this document is twofold: on the one hand, to provide a comprehensive description of the standards and criteria and on the other to give guidance to Schools in preparing their Self-Assessment report. From the outset it must also be remembered that the scope of EQUIS accreditation is institutional, the institution being defined as the organisational unit providing business and management education. This unit may in some cases be a free-standing business school; in others the unit is part of a wider institution, usually a university of which it is a faculty, school or department, depending on the organisation of the parent institution.

According to EQUIS – Quality Profile ⁹⁰ the Peers provide a report, indicating whether the institution satisfies the EQUIS standard in this area as defined in the Criteria Framework; or the School demonstrates outstanding quality, well above the level required to satisfy the EQUIS standard in this area, where it can be considered as a model of excellence; or whether the institution is judged to be below the threshold of the EQUIS standard in this area.

⁸⁷ Source: EQUIS Peer Review Guide

⁸⁸ The EFMD accreditation for international business schools

⁸⁹ EQUIS STANDARDS & CRITERIA

⁹⁰ Source: EQUIS – Quality Profile

The EQUIS accreditation process is composed of several distinct stages. The different stages are⁹¹:

0. Preliminary Inquiry
1. Formal Application
2. Eligibility
3. Self-Assessment
4. International Peer Review
5. Awarding Body Decision
6. Guided Development (optional)

The EQUIS Guide to Self-Assessment ⁹² describes the accreditation process as the EQUIS Director and his staff will provide information about the scheme and preliminary advice to Institutions that are considering application. Full documentation will be sent upon request in the Standard EQUIS Introductory Package.

Stage 1 Formal Application: Schools wishing to enter the scheme are invited to address a formal letter of application to the EQUIS Director and to complete the Data Sheet setting out basic factual information about the Institution. This document is available upon the website <http://www.efmd.org> and is part of the "Standard EQUIS Introductory Package."

Stage 2 Eligibility: Upon receipt of the completed application to enter the scheme, the Institution, will go through a preliminary Eligibility screening to determine whether there are major obstacles to eventual accreditation and whether accreditation is probable within a reasonable period, typically within 2 years of the eligibility decision. This phase is also designed to make sure that Institutions enter the EQUIS scheme with a full understanding of both the criteria and the process.

An important part of this Eligibility phase is the initial on-site briefing visit that takes place after the application and Data Sheet have been received.

The EQUIS Committee, which meets four times a year, is responsible for examining all applications and for taking decisions on eligibility to enter the accreditation process.

This screening process is designed to ensure that an Institution

1. Falls within the institutional scope of the EQUIS scheme
2. Is recognised as an Institution of good standing in its home market
3. Has a reasonable prospect of satisfying EQUIS criteria within 2 years

Stage 3 Self-Assessment

Stage 4 International Peer Review

Stage 5 Awarding Body Decision

The Evaluation Form is intended to be a working document for Peer Reviewers to help them build up their assessment of the School during the on-site visit. It will also serve as a basis for the drafting of the Peer Review report following the visit. ⁹³

The **EFMD Programme Accreditation System (EPAS)** provides⁹⁴:

- international programme accreditation to make the global market for programmes more transparent to the benefit of prospective students, employers and national higher education regulation agencies
- an instrument for continuous quality improvement of programmes
- a service to EFMD members as a complement to the existing quality improvement system for whole institutions (EQUIS)
- another credible system designed and operated by EFMD which is recognised globally as having the status and experience for delivering quality improvement and assessment schemes

Scope of EPAS:

EPAS is open to any member institution of EFMD, with the exception of those that are EQUIS accredited or that are in the process of applying for EQUIS accreditation. Programmes must be in the business and/or management (or related) areas and be internationally oriented. EPAS may be applied to any degree programme or set of closely related programmes such as:

- A. Bachelors degrees (3 or 4 years)
- B. Masters degrees (1 or 2 years, often based on the Bologna model)
 - a. Generalist (eg MSc in Management)
 - b. Specialist (eg MSc in Marketing or in Finance)
- C. Masters degrees pre-Bologna (5 or more years) or equivalent
- D. Master of Business Administration – MBA (post-experience)
- E. Doctorates (eg PhD or DBA)

⁹¹ EQUIS International Accreditation Procedures

⁹² EQUIS Guide to Self-Assessment, March 2007,

⁹³ EQUIS International Accreditation Procedures, p. 16f

⁹⁴ EPAS – EFMD Programme Accreditation System, p. 3-7

Benefits and Target Market

The benefits of EPAS include both international market recognition and advice on programme definition, quality improvement and the opportunity of benchmarking. The target institutions are those that offer programmes designed to recruit international students in the spirit of the European Bologna Accord, for which international mobility and internationalisation is an embedded philosophy.

EPAS Standards

These standards relate to the Programme Value Chain Model and are more fully explained with associated criteria in the document:

EPAS Standards and Criteria.

I. The Institution in its National and International Context

II. Programme Design

III. Programme Delivery & Operations

IV. Programme Outcomes

V. Quality Assurance Processes

The institution is requested to make a formal application to EFMD expressing its wish to enter the EPAS accreditation process and explaining its strategic objectives in doing so. This letter of application should be accompanied by an Application Datasheet, which presents basic factual information on the institutional context of the programme(s), the programme objectives and the support infrastructure. The eligibility decision to be made by EPAS Committee depends entirely on the data provided on the Application Datasheet.

Once accredited, programmes accredited for 5 years are required to submit a Mid-Term Progress Report and those accredited for 3 years are required to submit Annual Progress Reports. Consultancy advice will be offered by EFMD for programmes not achieving accreditation.

EFMD CEL - Programme accreditation for teChnology-Enhanced Learning ⁹⁵

The Executive Office for EFMD CEL is located at the – Swiss Centre for Innovations in Learning (SCIL): University of St. Gallen. Switzerland. The quality of both the products and programs in the field of ICT-based learning vary widely and there is still lacking a concept of quality improvement which is theoretically sound and at the same time meeting the expectations of practice. The fundamental objective of the EFMD CEL programme is to raise the standard of technology-enhanced learning programmes worldwide. EFMD CEL aims to facilitate standard setting, benchmarking, mutual learning, and the dissemination of good practice. It allows for different approaches and diversity in designing and implementing such programmes. EFMD CEL is directed towards educational management programmes incorporating ICT-based learning.

Validation

Another option for achieving accreditation of programmes for non-accredited providers or additional European region accreditation for overseas programmes is the UK system of validation.

Validation: Independent review of a self-assessment process by an outside quality assurance structure. Validation usually applies at the program level. (U.K.) The process by which an institution with degree-awarding powers judges that a program developed and delivered by another institution or organization is of an appropriate quality and standard to offer its program. ⁹⁶

One of the most often applied validation services is provided by the University of Wales, UK ⁹⁷: The University aims to provide an international validation service across all subject boundaries by drawing on the University's pool of academic expertise and excellence. Wales University also seeks to maximise the University's status as a national award-granting University in an international context and to facilitate the development of mutually productive partnerships between the University and appropriate providers of education at centres in the UK and overseas. All University of Wales validated schemes operate under the auspices of the University's Validation Board and its administrative section, the Validation Unit.

⁹⁵ http://www.efmd.org/html/Accreditations/cont_detail.asp?id=040929dygl&aid=041027wszf&tid=1&ref=ind

⁹⁶ CHEA – International Quality Review: Glossary of Key Terms in Quality Assurance and Accreditation

⁹⁷ wales.ac.uk

Quality Standards

ISO/IEC 19796-1 is specifically designed for learning, education, and training. It helps to extend generic standards like ISO 900x for educational organizations. Other national and international standards (like PAS 1032-1 and CEN/ISSS CWA 14644) have served as a base for international harmonization.⁹⁸

Excerpts from the standard:⁹⁹

Information technology — Learning, education and training — Quality management, assurance and metrics —

Part 1: General approach

1 Scope

This part of ISO/IEC 19796 provides a common framework to describe, specify, and understand critical properties, characteristics, and metrics of quality. The Reference Framework for the Description of Quality Approaches (RFDQ) is an elaborated and extensive process model. This standardization work harmonizes existing concepts, specifications, terms, and definitions for learning, education, and training.

The Reference Framework for the Description of Quality Approaches (RFDQ) is a framework to describe, compare, and analyze quality management and quality assurance approaches. These approaches can be mapped to RFDQ. Therefore, the framework is not a quality management or quality assurance model – it is a framework for the description of quality approaches. It will serve to compare different existing standards and to harmonize these towards a common quality model. For a better understanding of the standard, several annexes show samples of the usage of the standard – the annexes are based on the French "Code of Practice" and German DIN PAS 1032-1. Additionally, an annex on Reference Quality Criteria (RQC) is included. These criteria shall serve as reference criteria for the analysis and evaluation of learning resources and scenarios. These criteria are also not a quality assessment approach itself, but a framework to compare different quality assurance and quality assessment approaches.

The following figure shows the levels of quality approaches and the relation of the RFDQ and RQC to existing approaches.

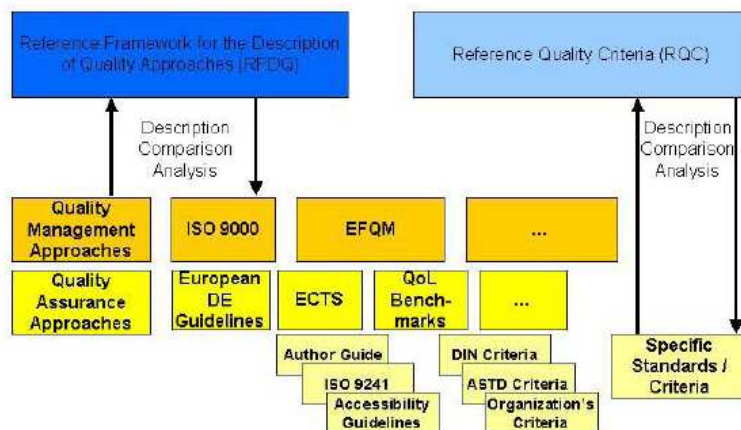


Figure 1: Levels of Quality Approaches

⁹⁸ ISO (2011) <http://www.iso.org/jtc1/sc36> ISO/IEC JTC1 SC36 WG5: Quality Assurance and Descriptive Frameworks. SC36 WG5 Guide "How to Use ISO/IEC 19796-1"

⁹⁹ ISO (2005) ISO/IEC 19796-1 First edition 2005-11-01 Information technology — Learning, education and training — Quality management, assurance and metrics — Part 1: General approach.

The new standard ISO/IEC 19796-1 provides a “reference framework for the description of quality approaches” (RFDQ). A reference framework gives an orientation which aspects should be covered and how solutions for these aspects can be found. The standard is an instrument to develop quality in the field of E-Learning. It consists of mainly two parts:

- A description scheme for quality approaches
- A process model as a reference classification

It supports the development quality profiles for organizations (such as objectives, methods, relations, people involved). Quality profiles means that the standard is adapted to the needs and requirements of an organization. It does not provide specific requirements or rules – it is a framework to guide actors through the process of quality development in the field of LET, specifically E-Learning.

The **Description Model** is just a scheme to interoperably describe quality approaches (such as guidelines, design guides, requirements). It documents all quality concepts in a transparent way. Each process can be described by this scheme:

Table 1: Description Model for Quality Approaches of ISO/IEC 19796-1¹⁰⁰

Attribute	Description	Example
ID	Unique Identifier	ID1234
Category	Main Process	Course Development
Process Name	Process name	Method selection
Description	Description of the process	“Within this process the didactic concept and methods are evaluated and selected”
Relations	Relation to other processes	“Before the method selection a target group analysis must be performed”; [Process 1.6]
Sub-processes / sub-aspects	Sub-processes / sub-aspects / tasks	Method identification Method alternatives Method prioritization
Objective	Objective of a Process	Adequate selection of one or more didactic concepts according to learner preferences and learning styles
Method	Methodology for this process	Method selection shall be based on the target group taking into account their competencies and learning styles. Methods are selected based on the teachers’ experience.
Result	Expected result of a process	Method specification Documents
Actors	Responsible / participating actors	Team Didactical Design, Project leader
Metrics / Criteria	Evaluation and Metrics for this process	Criteria catalogue 3.2.2-3.2.6
Standards	Standards used	DIN EN ISO 9241, LOM See Method Guidelines Handbook
Annotation / Example	Further Information, Examples of usage	

This model serves only as a base to provide a harmonized scheme to describe quality approaches.

¹⁰⁰ ISO (2011) <http://www.iso.org/jtc1/sc36> ISO/IEC JTC1 SC36 WG5: Quality Assurance and Descriptive Frameworks. SC36 WG5 Guide "How to Use ISO/IEC 19796-1"

The **Process Model** is a guide through the different processes when developing learning scenarios. The process model includes the relevant processes within the life-cycle of information and communication systems for learning, education, and training. The process model is divided in seven parts. Sub-processes are included referencing to a classification of processes.

Table 2: Process Model of ISO/IEC 19796-1¹⁰¹

ID	Category	Description/ Sub-Processes
NA	Needs Analysis	Identification and description of requirements, demands, and constraints of an educational project
		NA.1 Initiation NA.2 Stakeholder Identification NA.3 Definition of objectives NA.4 Demand analysis
FA	Framework Analysis	Identification of the framework and the context of an educational process
		FA.1 Analysis of the external context FA.2 Analysis of staff resources FA.3 Analysis of target groups FA.4 Analysis of the institutional and organizational context FA.5 Time and budget planning FA.6 Environment analysis
CD	Conception / Design	Conception and Design of an educational process
		CD.1 Learning objectives CD.2 Concept for contents CD.3 Didactical concept / methods CD.4 Roles and activities CD.5 Organizational concept CD.6 Technical concept CD.7 Concept for media and interaction design CD.8 Media concept CD.9 Communication concept CD.10 Concept for tests and evaluation CD.11 Concept for maintenance
DP	Development / Production	Realization of concepts
		DP.1 Content realization DP.2 Design realization DP.3 Media realization DP.4 Technical realization DP.5 Maintenance
IM	Implementation	Description of the implementation of technological components
		IM.1 Testing of learning resources IM.2 Adaptation of learning resources IM.3 Activation of learning resources IM.4 Organization of use IM.5 Technical infrastructure

¹⁰¹ ISO (2011) <http://www.iso.org/jtc1/sc36> ISO/IEC JTC1 SC36 WG5: Quality Assurance and Descriptive Frameworks. SC36 WG5 Guide "How to Use ISO/IEC 19796-1"

LP	Learning Process	Realization and use of the learning process
		LP.1 Administration LP.2 Activities LP.3 Review of competency levels
EO	Evaluation / Optimization	Description of the evaluation methods, principles, and procedures
		EO.1 Planning EO.2 Realization EO.3 Analysis EO.4 Optimization / Improvement

Excerpt from the standard:¹⁰²

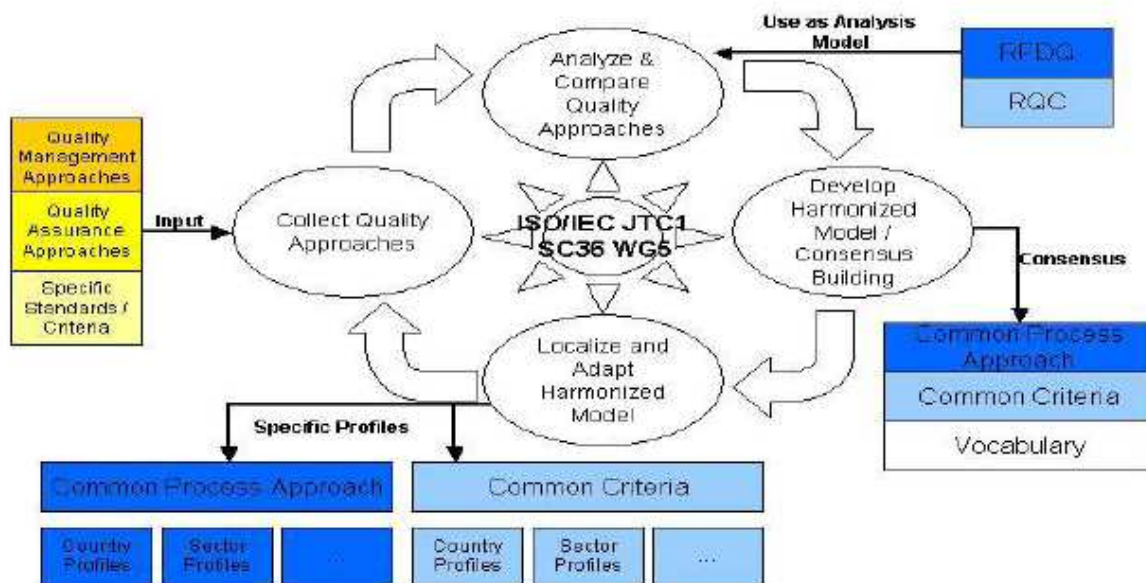


Figure 2: Standardization Process

¹⁰² ISO (2005) ISO/IEC 19796-1 First edition 2005-11-01 Information technology — Learning, education and training — Quality management, assurance and metrics — Part 1: General approach.

Quality Accreditation – ODLQC Standards

Open & Distance Learning Quality Council provides reputable accreditation of quality of open and distance education, however is not equivalent with recognition by the competent authorities of a programme or provider. ODL QC is the UK guardian of quality in open and distance learning. Set up originally by government in 1968, ODL QC is now independent. For the provider: Accreditation is open to all providers of home study, distance learning, online or e-learning and other open learning or flexible learning courses. To achieve accreditation, providers must be able to show that you meet ODL QC standards For the learner: Learners working with an ODL QC-accredited provider are sure of good service. ¹⁰³

Assessment involves taking snapshots of a provision from a variety of angles, and building them into a coherent picture. This is then presented to Council, who normally meet towards the end of each quarter. This guide explains the various stages.

In any assessment, the main components are ¹⁰⁴:

- ◆ Questionnaires to learners and tutors
- ◆ References from third parties
- ◆ Course assessment by specialists
- ◆ Overall assessment of the provision, based on a self-assessment undertaken by the provider
- ◆ Samples of materials (advertising and administrative)
- ◆ Visit by the reporting assessor
- ◆ Review by the Council

¹⁰³ <http://www.odlqc.org.uk/>

¹⁰⁴ *D1: Brief Guide to Assessment*. © ODL QC

STANDARDS I : OUTCOMES

- A.** Each course includes a clear statement of what the learner can hope to achieve on successful completion.
- B.** The methods, materials and support offered by the course are sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes.
- C.** Each course starts from a clearly stated level of ability and facilitates learner progress to a greater level of ability.
- D.** Statements that the level of ability inherent in the outcome can be matched to a nationally-agreed level of qualification are supported by appropriate evidence. When courses lead to degrees then those degrees are properly validated.
- E.** Where time limits for course completion are imposed by the provider, they are clearly stated, along with any possible extensions to this and related cost implications.
- F.** Any assessments set by the provider during or on completion of a course are appropriate and adequate to ensure a proper assessment of the learner's ability and achievements to date, and the results communicated to learners.
- G.** Documentary confirmation of outcomes is available where appropriate to all learners on course completion.
- H.** Where the outcome of a course is the declared competence to sit examinations offered, or be otherwise assessed, by another external organisation, the learner is informed of this, and of the respective responsibilities of provider and applicant, prior to enrolment.
- I.** The course and its objectives are placed in a wider educational, vocational & professional context.

STANDARDS II : RESOURCES

- A.** All resources supplied are appropriate to the needs, knowledge and experience of a stated group of learners.
- B.** The provider takes all reasonable steps to ensure that course materials are effective and do not contain significant errors of fact, misleading or out-of-date information, concepts or approaches.
- C.** Course materials are designed for a specific and clearly stated level of learner support, and suitable opportunities for such support, where intended, are built into the material.
- D.** Course materials are structured to facilitate individual study & the development of study skills.

STANDARDS III : SUPPORT

- A.** The provider maintains and demonstrates a clear commitment to helping learners achieve their educational goals.
- B.** The learner has overall responsibility for his or her own learning, and is informed that the provider's role is supportive.
- C.** Support offered is sufficient to meet the reasonable needs of learners, encourage the learning process and facilitate successful completion of the course.
- D.** Support is offered on a prompt, timely and wherever possible personal basis.
- E.** Support offered is appropriate to the level of the course.
- F.** The provider has adequate procedures to handle any difficulties between the learner and the provider, and learners are made fully aware of all the avenues open to them to resolve those difficulties.
- G.** Learners are encouraged to complete their courses. Progress is monitored, and learners are provided with prompt and helpful comments on their progress in relation to learning expectations and goals.

STANDARDS IV : SELLING

- A.** The provider, its staff, representatives and agents, conduct all promotional activity in a fair and ethical manner, follow commonly accepted best practices, and comply with all relevant legislation.
- B.** All advertising or promotional material gives a clear, accurate and balanced view of the provider, its personnel, its provision, the objectives and outcomes of that provision or the ease with which they can be obtained. All information included is real, current, and verifiable.
- C.** All enquiries from potential applicants are handled promptly, appropriately and sympathetically. In particular, staff engaged in promotion do not offer educational advice unless competent to do so.

- D.** Providers selling through home visits take particular care to avoid the possibility of mis-selling.
- E.** The applicant is made aware of his or her responsibility to assess the suitability of the course, and in particular in relation to their own needs, qualifications, capabilities and aspirations, before enrolment.
- F.** Providers offer sufficient information to enable each learner fully to assess the suitability of a course, including an opportunity to discuss it with the provider prior to enrolment.
- G.** Prior to enrolment on a particular course, the prospective learner is made properly aware of all terms and conditions relevant to that course, either in the prospectus or similar material, by correspondence, or in discussion with the provider.
- H.** Access requirements imposed by the provider for any course are appropriate, kept to the necessary minimum and published.
- I.** Enrolment when completed is confirmed to the learner, who then has a pre-defined period within which to withdraw from the course.

STANDARDS V : PROVIDERS

- A.** The provider maintains and demonstrates a strong commitment to educational values.
- B.** The provider is financially responsible and can meet its obligations to learners.
- C.** The provider adopts widely accepted norms of good ethical business and employment practice.
- D.** Where the provision occurs in another country, the provider ensures adherence to all relevant legal requirements.
- E.** All staff and tutors are suitable for their positions, and possess appropriate qualifications and experience.
- F.** All tutor support is of high quality. Where a provider employs more than one tutor, steps are taken to ensure that tutor support is consistent throughout the provision.
- G.** Learner records are sufficient, accurately maintained and up to date. Learners' concerns about the confidentiality of their records are respected.
- H.** Sufficient resources are available to ensure that every learner receives an adequate individual service
- I.** The provider adheres to all ODL QC Standards in Open and Distance Learning, and complies with all reasonable requests made by the Council.
- J.** The provider is committed to continuous improvement.

STANDARDS VI : COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

- A.** Any provision delivered by two or more organisations is covered by a written agreement which clearly specifies the respective rights and division of responsibilities between the partners.
- B.** One organisation (the "principal provider") has legal responsibility for delivery of the provision, and the learner is made aware of this.
- C.** The principal provider has in place procedures which ensure that all aspects of a provision meet ODL QC standards.
- D.** ODL QC Accreditation is specific to a particular service and a particular named aspect of a provision. Providers must avoid statements which imply that their accreditation extends to services not explicitly covered.
- E.** Providers should not promote courses as their own if they are not.

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- EMFD: The EFMD accreditation for international business schools. <http://www.efmd.org>
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- EQUAL: "A RESPONSIBLE APPROACH TO LEAGUE TABLES". THE VIEW OF MEMBERS OF EQUAL, THE EUROPEAN QUALITY LINK FOR BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION. EQUAL Secretariat, rue Gachard 88, B-1050 Brussels, tel. +32-2-6290810, fax +32-2-6290811.
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